

Decisive and sustained action to build a National Democratic Society

PREFACE TO THE 2007 STRATEGY AND TACTICS

AS ADOPTED BY THE 53RD NATIONAL CONFERENCE

16-20 DECEMBER 2012, MANGAUNG, FREE STATE

INTRODUCTION

1. The 53rd Conference of the African National Congress, 2012 confirmed the Strategy and Tactics adopted at the 52nd National Conference as encapsulating the transition from apartheid colonialism to a National Democratic Society and re-affirmed the centrality of the Freedom Charter as our lodestar.
2. Conference also resolved that a note should be appended to the 2007 edition of the **Strategy and Tactics** of the ANC, in the form of this Preface, in order to:
 - ❑ deepen our analysis of the first 18 years of the transition;
 - ❑ assess the on-going shift in the balance of forces;
 - ❑ reflect on the evolving character of the ANC;
 - ❑ characterise the next phase of the transition; and
 - ❑ elaborate the pillars and major tasks of this phase.
3. The Preface aims to assist in the interpretation of *Strategy and Tactics 2007* against the backdrop of the task of ensuring decisive and accelerated progress towards the eradication of the legacy of apartheid colonialism and the construction of a National Democratic Society. In this regard, a full understanding of the objectives and programme of the ANC requires that this *Preface* and *Strategy and Tactics 2007* be read as a whole.
4. The review of *Strategy and Tactics 2007* takes place during the centenary of the formation of the African National Congress. This momentous occasion has afforded the ANC, its allies and partners in the broad democratic front, within South Africa and abroad, to celebrate

a historic achievement. It has also provided an opportunity for reflection on the deeper meaning of the national liberation struggle during its various phases and the challenges going forward, as the ANC enters the second century of its existence.

CHARACTER OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

5. *Strategy and Tactics 2007* affirms the strategic goal of the NDR as the resolution of the three basic and inter-related contradictions of Colonialism of a Special Type in South Africa (where the colonised and the colonial metropolis lived within one nation-state): racial oppression, class super-exploitation* and patriarchal relations of power. These antagonisms found expression in *“national oppression based on race; class super-exploitation directed against Black workers; and the triple oppression of the mass of women based on their race, their class and their gender. The main content of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) therefore remains the liberation of Africans in particular and Blacks in general from political*

and socio-economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female.”

6. Our democratic political system is founded on political, socio-economic and other human rights which are enshrined in the country's Constitution. The realisation of these rights in actual practice requires, among others:
- ❑ The mobilisation of the nation around a common vision of the kind of society we seek to attain, acting in partnership with each sector for the realisation of the common good.
 - ❑ The means for citizens to exercise the full range of their human rights, including progressive realisation of socio-economic rights, and for checks and balances in a law-governed society.
 - ❑ Popular participation of the people in the process of development, and with special focus on the poor and marginalised.
 - ❑ Building a united and inclusive South African

nation in which the multiple identities based on class, gender, age, language, geographic location and religion are a source of strength, adding to the diversity of the continent and humanity at large.

7. The socio-economic character of the National Democratic Society is based on the resolution of the historical injustice and the building of a democracy with social content, which includes:

- ❑ A political and socio-economic system which places the needs of the poor and social issues such as health care, education, basic services and a social security floor at the top of the national agenda;
- ❑ Accelerated growth and development in a mixed economy which includes state and private capital as well as co-operative, worker-based, community and other forms of social ownership of the means of production;
- ❑ An active developmental and leadership role of the state in the economy and the pursuit of full

employment;

- ❑ A democratic developmental state that leads accelerated and sustainable change through interactive, intensive and sustainable transformation of the structural causes of economic exclusion and social underdevelopment, including the spatial imbalances inherited from the apartheid era;
- ❑ The quest for equality and protection of the human dignity of all;
- ❑ Sustainable utilisation of natural endowments and the protection and regeneration of the environment as an inheritance of current and future generations;
- ❑ Strong partnership with the trade union movement and other mass and sectoral formations; and
- ❑ The promotion of the African agenda based, among others, on the pursuit of peace, economic growth and development, continental integration, democracy and human rights; and international solidarity.

THE FIRST TWO DECADES OF FREEDOM

8. The breakthrough of 1994 marked a decisive break with the history of colonialism. South Africans, led by the ANC elected with an overwhelming majority as the leading 'party' in government, had the opportunity to determine their destiny and together realise the ideal of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society. This was underpinned by the adoption of the 1996 Constitution which articulates a broad framework of the national aspiration for united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa.
9. The immediate strategic priority of this phase was therefore to rid the country of the vestiges of apartheid colonialism and to launch the process of constructing a National Democratic Society. This formed the basis of our Programme of National Democratic Transformation during this period.
10. The implementation of this programme during the first two decades has seen major advances, but also setbacks and

challenges. Both the advances and setbacks were influenced by the prevailing domestic and global balance of forces, as well as by subjective factors such as the strategic, governance and organisational capabilities of the ANC as the leader of the forces for transformation. The major advances during the two decades include:

- ❑ The establishment of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist political order;
- ❑ The introduction of democratic rights for all citizens and the establishment of vibrant institutions;
- ❑ The adoption and implementation of a Constitution that promotes consistent equality and encompasses first, second, third and fourth generations of human rights (political, socio-economic, environmental as well as informational rights);
- ❑ A Constitution that forms the underlying foundation for women's development, gender equality and a non-sexist society, and given effect through policies,

- legislation and institutions to give effect to this vision;
 - ❑ Programmes aimed at meeting basic needs such as housing, roads, and access to electricity, sanitation and water;
 - ❑ The integration of security forces and improving access to the criminal justice system;
 - ❑ Programmes to empower women and to transform gender relations;
 - ❑ Improving access to health care and dealing with the burden of disease;
 - ❑ The introduction of an extensive system of social grants, free basic services and other social policies to eliminate poverty and provide sustainable livelihoods;
 - ❑ Measures to develop our human resources through education and skills;
 - ❑ A programme of economic transformation that saw growth and some job creation after decades of stagnation;
 - ❑ The introduction of strong elements of participatory democracy; and
 - ❑ Building mutually-beneficial relations with other nations, and working for a better Africa and better world.
11. Given the nature of the political settlement, the democratic movement used the breakthrough of 1994 as a beach-head to lay the foundation for a systemic transition from colonialism to a National Democratic Society.
 12. Despite these major achievements, the structural legacy of colonialism remain deeply entrenched as reflected in the colonial, sexist and super-exploitative structure of our economy; the spatial patterns of development and underdevelopment; and the social, human resources and infrastructure backlogs.
 13. This structural legacy finds particular expression in mass poverty and extreme inequality, which were inherent to colonialism. The following are amongst the issues, which contribute to the continued persistence of this legacy:
 - ❑ The constraints during the initial years after the 1994 breakthrough, informed by the need to steer the

country through a smooth transition buttressed by the sunset clauses, build mutual confidence among the historical contending forces and forge wider appreciation of the imperatives of social change.

- ❑ Our transition in 1994 took place in a global climate that was hostile to progressive policies. This, coupled with the stagnant economy, deep inequalities and systemic underdevelopment inherited from the Apartheid years, imposed limitations to the options at our disposal to effect rapid fundamental change.
- ❑ Whilst we made progress in transforming the state in terms of its representativity, orientation and its role, we continue to have challenges of state capacity, strategic coherence, the orientation of the public service and the capacity to effectively implement policies of change and monitor and evaluate such implementation, thus impacting on our ability to decisively effect broader social and economic transformation.

- ❑ Poor conduct on the part of sections of the ANC leadership, including new expressions of corruption and greed, which not only result in the wastage of public resources, but also undermine confidence of our people in government and in our movement.
- ❑ The challenge of the unity and cohesion of the ANC and the Alliance, impacting not only on the ability to mobilise and organise the motive forces in transformation, but also on the pace of transformation.
- ❑ Slow progress in overcoming the inherited structure of the economy, such that despite a period of sustained growth, there have not been fundamental changes in the essential structure of the economy. This is characterised, amongst other things, by trade imbalances with a high reliance on unbeneficiated mineral exports and the importation of high-value capital and luxury goods, a relatively weakly developed manufacturing and industrial sector, dysfunctional spatial distortions, high levels of

corporate concentration in the financial, mining and retail sectors and the concomitant weaknesses of small and medium enterprise development, and regional underdevelopment.

- ❑ Despite many commendable gains, the working class has experienced massive challenges, including high rates of unemployment, decline in their share of the national income, growth of practices such as outsourcing and subcontracting – all of which can have the effect of weakening workers' bargaining power.
- ❑ Insufficient attention to promoting a non-racial, non-sexist, deliberative and participatory democratic culture within the movement and society generally.
- ❑ Failure to address the challenge of expanding democratic rights within an inherently exploitative system in which access to resources plays a central role.

GLOBAL BALANCE OF FORCES

14. Over the past few years, the centre of economic growth and development has systematically shifted from the North to the South. Huge swathes of geographic locations in Asia, Latin America and Africa have experienced high rates of economic growth and development, with hundreds of millions extricated from absolute poverty. This changing balance has accelerated with the global economic crisis, located mainly in countries of the North.
15. At the same time, after two decades of the dominance of laissez faire market ideology, this crisis has reopened discourse on the relationship between the state, the market and the citizen on a global scale. Along with this, a global movement against extreme inequality within and among nations is taking root, challenging the greed and ostentation that has characterised distribution of wealth and income. This has created a more favourable climate for progressive alternatives than was the case at the start of our transition. Added to this is the

rapid technological change including information and communication technologies and expanding access to some of these technologies by peoples of the developing world. At the same time, the challenge of global warming presents both opportunities and threats to the whole of humanity.

16. The rest of the African continent, South Africa's immediate neighbourhood, has largely been positively affected by the changing global balance of economic power. At the same time, the consolidation of peace and the spread of democratic governance and improved economic management, has created immense opportunities for growth and development. Many countries on the continent are experiencing high rates of growth and improvement in the quality of life of their populations.
17. These developments provide unique opportunities for South Africa to diversify its economic relations, exploit/build on its comparative advantages on the continent and across countries of the South, and integrate differently into the global economy.

EMERGENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

18. Within South Africa, experience in managing the transition and experimenting with different approaches and instruments to drive growth and development stands the state and the country in good stead. This experience includes the development and implementation of infrastructure programmes, industrial policies and human development initiatives, as well as deployment of state-owned enterprises, exercise of competition regulations and testing various forums of interactions among the social partners.
19. The positive changes that have arisen out of access to opportunity by a Black majority historically excluded from many professions and the commanding heights of the economy have generated new dynamics in the class structure of South African society. While the distribution of wealth and income is still largely defined in racial and gender terms, a significant section of Black people have risen into the middle and upper strata.
20. The limited progress in the narrowing of the racial income

gap has been accompanied by growing inequality across society as a whole, with a large section of Black people, especially youth and women, mired in income poverty. The persistence of these fault-lines – even with minor changes in the racial dimension – has led to a strong sense of injustice in society, and has the potential to undermine progress and even derail the creation of a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society.

21. The changing class structure of South African society and of the Black community in particular, reflected in part in the rise of Black middle and upper classes, is a consequence of state policy and of opportunities attached to access to political and state power. This presents the danger of an inverted causality and perverse incentive in which access to political and state institutions is pursued as the ladder through which individuals can improve their personal socio-economic circumstances, thus corrupting the body politic. This in turn can undermine the legitimacy of the state and the political system as a whole.

22. The transition has also coincided with and contributed to changes in the nature of capital. This sector is most likely to resist fundamental transformation, and thus the relationship characterised by an approach of unity and struggle of opposites.

23. Overall, there is a growing appreciation among various sectors of society that the current configuration of the country's political economy is unsustainable. Leaders of all sectors of society are at one that the levels of poverty and inequality are unsustainable. The clamour for a national vision and programme to speed up movement to shared prosperity is commonly shared.

CHARACTER OF THE ANC AND THE TASKS OF ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL

24. Any project of thorough-going transformation requires a united revolutionary movement rooted amongst the people, with a corps of cadres and organisational capabilities to strategise, coordinate and implement the programme of

transformation. It requires consistency, determination and vigilance on the part of the movement to deal with weaknesses and threats, to build on its strengths and to seize and create opportunities for more rapid movement forward. The leadership of the movement must reflect these qualities even more profoundly.

25. Concerns have been raised over the past fifteen years about the development of these capabilities within the ANC and the broader progressive movement, in the changing environment. This refers to such developments as the impact of political incumbency on the character and tasks of the movement, the changes amongst the motive forces and our society brought about by the transformation of the last two decades, the global and continental balance of forces, and the impact of globalisation and the mass information and communications revolution on the ANC and the motive forces.
26. It also refers to some of the subjective developments within our movement, all of which undermine its unity and cohesion, the extent to which

it remains rooted amongst the people, and indeed its ability to pursue the National Democratic Revolution. These developments include abuse of state resources, factionalism and divisions, the poor state of discipline and a resultant decline in political consciousness and activism. This prompted the call by the 2007 National Conference for a *'sustained period of organisational renewal'*. But beyond moral exhortations, the ANC and the broad democratic movement as a whole need to develop a better understanding of the changing class structure of South African society, the relationship between these changes and access to state power and positions of authority across society, and the impact this has on the broad democratic movement and society at large.

27. This call for organisational renewal is even more relevant as we enter the second century of the ANC's existence, and chart the way forward for our country for the coming decades. Among the reflections on the occasion of the centenary of the ANC is a common appreciation that the ANC survived over the

past 100 years, due to, among others:

- ❑ A consistent commitment to the liberation of the people;
- ❑ Its deep roots and connection with the people;
- ❑ Its vibrant internal democracy and collective leadership;
- ❑ Readiness and willingness of its members to make sacrifices in pursuit of the cause of the people as a whole;
- ❑ Preparedness to acknowledge its weaknesses and decisively address them in order to escalate and accelerate the people's struggle;
- ❑ Ability to adapt to changing conditions and rise to the occasion at critical moments;
- ❑ The engendering of the national liberation movement, through the struggles of women, as articulated in the ANC Women's Charter of 1954 and the Women's Charter for Effective Equality of 1994.
- ❑ Ability to uphold and

build unity across a broad front of South Africans and progressive forces in the world in pursuit of a humane cause.

28. Organisational renewal is principally about building the ANC's resilience, enhancing its transformative capacity and its ability to adapt to changing situations so that it can continue to serve and lead the people. The urgent and central tasks of renewal therefore include:

- ❑ Deepening our analysis of the present political, economic and social conjuncture and the shifts that have happened since 1994;
- ❑ Development and systematic implementation of cadre and leadership policy;
- ❑ Renewal of the ANC's core values and safeguarding its reputation;
- ❑ Re-organising the ANC organizational machinery to improve its performance in all the pillars of transformation;
- ❑ Strengthening the Alliance and progressive civil society as well as progressive

social movements;

- ❑ Building the strategic, organizational and technical capacities of the ANC structures and cadreship to mobilize and advance women's emancipation and gender equality; including consciousness raising programmes for men, to empower them to understand and support the liberation of women and gender equality.
- ❑ Improving the capacity of the developmental state; and
- ❑ Improving financial sustainability and self-sufficiency of the movement.

29. This programme of renewal will requires consistent work by the leadership, cadreship and membership of our movement at all levels, to ensure that we root out the negative tendencies, and that the ANC strengthens its capabilities as leader of the progressive forces and agent for change.
30. Failure to do so will render the ANC incapable of leading society in moving to a new trajectory of growth and

development. The revolution will stall; the social chasms will widen; and society will be rent apart. As such, if there were any central factor to the progress of the South African nation in this period of movement to a new phase, it is the quality of the ANC: its leadership, its cadreship and its membership.

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE TRANSITION

31. South Africa is in a continuing and seamless transition from Apartheid colonialism to a National Democratic Society. The interventions required to speed up change, especially with regard to economic and social transformation, can be understood as marking a second phase in the transition to a National Democratic Society. This second phase of the transition should be characterised by decisive action to effect thorough-going economic transformation and democratic consolidation. This is critical in order to improve people's quality of life, but also in the promotion of nation-building and social cohesion. For this to happen, the ANC, the Alliance and the broad democratic forces

need to renew themselves to chart this course and lead in its implementation.

32. At the core of the second phase should be a concerted drive to eradicate poverty and to reduce inequality. Every South African should enjoy a decent quality of life. This applies both to income poverty and access to basic services. The primary focus in this regard should be higher rates of economic growth and social inclusion, reflected primarily in massive job creation skills development, the provision of quality public goods and services and the expansion of small, medium enterprises and cooperatives.

33. This requires deliberate efforts, among others, to build infrastructure, diversify the industrial base, expand employment opportunities, to develop a national system of innovation to grow our knowledge-based sectors, intensify programmes to ensure environmental sustainability, develop human resources, and implement urgent programmes to eliminate youth and women marginalisation.

34. Programmes to extend access to basic services such as education,

health, water, electricity, sanitation and housing should be intensified. While universal access should receive urgent attention, emphasis in this phase should also be placed on the quality of these services. Social grants should reach all who are eligible; and decisive measures should be taken to provide sustainable livelihoods.

35. It is vital, on the occasion of the centenary of the 1913 Land Act and given the systematic programme of dispossession that was at the core of colonialism, to reiterate the critical importance of access to land. Programmes to eradicate poverty and to reduce inequality will succeed only if the land question is systematically addressed. This is recognising the importance of land as an asset, a resource for economic activity and sustainable livelihoods, an indispensable means for social programmes, a common environmental inheritance and a critical ingredient to the attainment of human dignity.

36. The state should play a central role in leading the initiatives aimed at achieving a decent quality of life for all. The programme to build a

democratic developmental state that is responsive, legitimate, capable and accountable should therefore be intensified.

37. The realisation of these ideals requires partnership across the board, with the state and business, labour, community and other sectors working together for the common good. In this regard, the truism that 'the people are their own liberators' remains as relevant as ever, in this new phase of the transition.
38. The ANC welcomes and embraces Vision 2030 and the National Development Plan as a critical basis for united action by all South Africans to build a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society. In many respects, the National Development Plan accords with the objectives of the ANC and its own elaboration of the second phase of the transition to a National Democratic Society.

THE PILLARS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

39. The transition from apartheid colonialism to a national democratic society requires that the ANC, in theory and action elaborates, implements

and reviews the concrete tasks across the pillars of socio-economic transformation. These pillars have been identified in the *2007 Strategy and Tactics* document, as the key strategic terrains of struggle and transformation:

- (a) Building a democratic developmental state
 - (b) Transforming the economy
 - (c) Ideological work and the battle of ideas
 - (d) International work
 - (e) Mass mobilisation and organisation.
40. The ANC should locate itself at the centre of these pillars, improving its strategic approaches, organisational capabilities and its links with the motive forces in each pillar, appreciating the changing dynamics in society which are themselves a product of the progress society has made over the past 18 years.

OUR PROGRAMME OF NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION

41. What then are the main steps that we need to take, in these different pillars, to bring us closer to the ideal of a national democratic society?

The answer to this question is informed by the character of the NDR; the foundations, experiences and challenges of the first two decades; and our reading of the current balance of forces.

42. In broad terms, our approach is informed by the ideals contained in the Freedom Charter, adopted at the Congress of the People in 1955. The practical measures towards a national democratic society are contained in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) adopted by the ANC, the Tripartite Alliance and the broad mass democratic movement in the run-up to the first democratic elections. This was further updated and elaborated in Election Manifestos during subsequent elections.

CONCLUSION

43. The 2007 52nd Conference resolved that the balance of forces was shifting in favour of the forces of progress and a humane world order. Many of the changes since the 52nd National Conference confirm the basic conclusions reached in the *Strategy and Tactics* document. The central challenge remains that of intensifying the struggle

in line with the five pillars, so that we make decisive progress over the next two decades in eradicating the legacy of apartheid colonialism and in building a National Democratic Society.

44. More than ever before, the capacity of the ANC to adapt to changing conditions and to renew itself for new challenges, will be the dividing line between revolution and counter-revolution. While in the trenches of anti-apartheid struggle, the jackboot of oppression impelled continuous self-improvement, the comforts of access to political power have the insidious capacity to lull revolutionaries into complacency.
45. The motive forces of the revolution cry out for strategic, decisive and ethical leadership. Society yearns for united action to realise a decent quality of life for all. As we emerge from this, the 53rd National Conference of our movement, taking place in the year of its centenary, we rededicate ourselves to the mission of freedom and service to our people. Thus South Africa shall move faster to the realisation of a National Democratic Society.

Course: National Democratic Revolution

12102, ANC, Preface to Strategy and Tactics, 2012

Word count: unknown